DEPARTMENT OF STATE

AIRGRAM

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HANDLING INDICATOR

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

INFO: ATHENS, NEA/GTI

FROM : Amconsul THESSALONIKI

SUBJECT: Caramanlis' Thessaloniki Speech of October 6, 1963

REF :

Attached is an abridged version of the speech delivered by former Prime Minister CARAMANLIS in Thessaloniki on October 6, 1963.

Briefly, the speech is divided into five major sections:

1. Opening remarks announcing his new campaign, expressing his faith in the people as proven by his three previous resignations and explaining his concept of power as a means for achievement for the nation rather than as an end in itself.

2. An accounting of his eight years in office.

3. His plans for the future.

4. An attack against the opposition — primarily directed against the CU, and

5. Finally, tied to the fourth point, his belief in need for Constitutional reform to protect democracy in Greece.

Robert S. Folsom
Consul General

Encl: Abridged Version of Mr. Caramanlis' Speech in Thessaloniki, October 6, 1963

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MR. CARAMANLIS' SPEECH IN THESSALONIKI, OCTOBER 6, 1963

(Abridged)

Dear Citizens of Thessaloniki:

The time has come for you to express your sovereign will and to set out freely with your vote on the road to progress which the people of sterile negation and the abusers of Democracy have attempted to obstruct. As you already know, I was forced by circumstances to be absent from the country for several months. I am sure that you have all realized that I could not help this for the sake of the country. As soon as elections were proclaimed, I returned to lead anew a campaign which will be crucial for the future of this nation. Loyal to an old custom of mine, I am starting this campaign from Northern Greece with which I am connected with particular bonds.

The People Should Decide. Three times since 1955, I have resorted of my own free will to the people, although in each case I could have stayed in power much longer. I did this each time because I believed that, instead of secret bargaining, it was more expedient to solicit the verdict of the people — the source of true democracy. To secure a normal political life for the country I had to make concessions which were unusual for the country, despite discontent of my friends. I agreed that caretaker governments organize the elections, although I was not compelled to do this by the Constitution. Moreover, in the last elections I helped in a positive manner in the creation of the Center Union. This I did to the detriment of my own party, in the belief it was a duty to the nation because the left wing had become the second party in the country after the elections of 1958.

Power a Medium not a Target. My previous acts are an evidence that for me power is not a target, but a medium to serve the interests of the nation, and I have given proof of my devotion to the people and of my absolute adherence to democratic practices.

The Center Union has made no effort to stabilize its position as a party to succeed me in the government; instead, through its unwise policy, it has made EDA dangerous not only for the country but for the Center Union itself. The Center Union created the myth of "nothia" (violence) which is greatest deceit in Greek history. It is a deceit because it is practically impossible to use pressure on the Greek voter. The Center Union was in need of such a myth as an excuse for its policy of blackmail, which was implemented in a well planned manner.

In view of above, I resigned and recommended that the King dissolve the parliament and call for new elections under the majority system which was in force at that time. I believed this was the indicated solution in order to put an end to the tactic of blackmailing. Instead a policy of smoothening political tensions was applied.

The Center Union Wants no Elections. To facilitate the decisions of the King, I left the country and instructed my party to back this policy. Two caretaker governments succeeded one another for the purpose of organizing invulnerable elections. I felt that the crisis created through my resignation would give an opportunity to the opposition to become at least a lawful party. In spite of all this, it soon became clear that the Center Union did not earnestly want elections, knowing in advance they would be disastrous for it. Considering all these facts, I come before you today to solicit your confidence in me and to ask for the permanent condemnation of the dangerous methods of the opposition.

The Work of the Last Eight Years. The work accomplished in the last eight years is a guarantee of the sincerity of my words. In the past, I gave an account of this work, and I am going to mention it again seeking not praise, but a fair judgment. I desire to know if you want me to continue this work with new power and with a constantly increasing feeling of responsibility. The work I have accomplished in the last eight-year period was manifold and covers all fields of the Nation's life.

The Foreign Policy. The foreign policy I followed was the one compelled by the geographical position of Greece, by the security of the nation and its future aspirations. This policy has raised the prestige of Greece and has significantly strengthened Greece's international position. In a world tried by numerous crises, this country is not only regarded as secure, but also as contributing decisively to the security of the free world, and as a factor of world peace. By tradition and owing to basic ideological convictions, we belong to the West. But along with the West and the leading powers of Democracy, we belong to the entire world. Our alliances are no challenge to anyone. On the contrary, they helped to secure a balance in world power, and, consequently, in peace. We fully share the strenuous and sincere effort of those governments of the West which undertook the crucial dialogue with the other side which might - and we sincerely wish this - save us from destruction. My basic aim has been to make close those ties which are related to the security of this country. I have, nevertheless, followed a friendly and honest policy towards all other nations which were honest with us. This tactic proved to be a productive one. In spite of ideological differences, Greece's relations - both economic and moral - were promoted considerably even with the countries of the eastern bloc to our mutual interest.

The confidence foreign countries have in Greece has made it possible for this country to be associated with the European Economic Community under the best possible conditions, and the economic and political significance of this association will be decisive in the future of the country.

The National Income was Doubled. In the economic field I will continue and complete the policy I have been applying so far as I have no reason to regret it. Per capita income was almost doubled during the eight-year

period; from $230 in 1955 it increased to $400, and if there is political stability, it will be $500 about the end of 1967. International economic organizations have praised our economic achievements.

Agricultural Development. Serious economic, social and organizational measures were taken to increase agricultural production and to improve living conditions of the Greek farmer. Credits to farmers increased from 3.5 billion drachmas in 1955 to more than 10 billion in 1963. A large part of these were long-term loans. Investments in farming were 679 million drachmas in 1955 and as high as 3,670 million by 1963. For reclamation works 156 million drachmas were spent in 1955; 1,300 million in 1963. Subsidies were provided for items such as cotton, sugar beets, and feed-stuffs. Medical care plans have been realized since 1956. In 1963 a total of 1,270 million drachmas will be paid to aged farmers as pensions.

Industrialization. The total worth of the present industries in Greece is figured at approximately $600 million. This is about the value of the new industries on the government program. In a short period of time the country's accomplishment in industry will be as large as those of the last 100 years. Thessaloniki and Northern Greece will benefit more from the new industries, but the other provincial districts will also have their share.

Power. Since 1960 PPC has been working on a 10-year plan whose total projects call for investment of $700 million, a figure unexampled in Greek economic history.

Public Works. A systematic effort is being made to improve the road system of the country. In 1955, 300 million drachmas were spent for roads; since 1960 a total of 1,400 million is spent annually.

Workers' Income. Between the years 1955 and 1963 the workers' income increased by 96%, while the cost of living index increased by 12.2%.

Monetary Stability. The standard of living of the Greek people, although the highest in the Balkans, is still far from that of other advanced nations of the west. I shall not neglect the claims of the various classes, but I am decided to oppose any measure which would impair the economic stability of the country. Those who do not agree with this policy better not vote for me.

The New 10-Year Plan announced by my government last spring and which will be implemented as of 1965 provides for the following:

Rapid and Complete Industrialization which will provide work for all Greek workers in the next 10 year period. This will put an end to the question of migration, a problem as old as the Greek nation, but yet an issue for political exploitation and demagoguery. The demagogues pretend to ignore the fact that the same problem is faced by other countries, including Italy, which has a long tradition in industry.

Increases in Wages and Production. The association of this country with the Common Market will lead to progressive increases in salaries and wages to meet European standards. As a consequence, production rates will have to be the same as those in Europe. Management should realize that I will not tolerate keeping wages and salaries below objective levels.

Provincial Industrial Centers. Industrialization will lead to a serious reduction in the provincial population. Tremendous movements of population will take place, but every effort will be made to have industries founded in provincial centers. Special privileges will be extended to industries founded in the provinces. There is a scheme for the founding of the first five industrial zones in Thessaloniki, Patras, Volos, Kavalla, and Iraklion, Kriti, which was announced last April.

Regional development programs will be undertaken which are expected to solve the economic and social problems of the various areas.

Education the Main Target. To achieve the economic and social aims of the new 10 year plan, it is necessary to reform our educational system. Being aware of this responsibility, I wish to announce that as of the day after the elections, the primary task of the Greek state will be to improve education. Much demagoguery was employed on this issue by my opponents who have disregarded the fact that similar problems are faced by advanced countries. I am decided to give absolute priority to the field of education. In 1955, the total amounts spent for education were 813 million drachmas; in 1963 these were as high as 2,350 million. The people of Thessaloniki remember the condition of their University at the time my administration took over and the assistance since given to this institution. I can now pledge myself to start an extensive campaign to improve education, and the Greek people know that I keep my promises.

A new orientation of education, more higher educational institutions, reorganization and expansion of vocational schools and reforms in the school program will be the principal objectives.

Conditions for the Success of the Plan. Political stability and normal operation of the democratic system are necessary if the broad objectives of the new 10 year plan are to be achieved. In many instances I spotted weakness in our present political system. Two years ago, I stressed to you the need for constitutional reforms. The survival of our democratic system depends on adjustments to be made in the Constitution according to the demands of the present period.

Democracy is Delicate. The elections of 1961 proved that the Greek people appreciated the seriousness of my appeal and gave me their increased confidence. The policy, on the other hand, which the opposition followed after its defeat proved that I was right in asking for reforms in our present administration system. Moreover, the anti-democratic and blackmailing

attitude of the opposition gave evidence that this question is more serious and that, consequently, more serious reforms should be made. Democracy is fragile like any valuable thing. Democracy becomes more delicate as long as it includes some who are constantly plotting and those who are inspired by negative ideas as is the case with those who want to abolish it.

The minority in the parliament did not hesitate in many instances to cooperate openly or secretly with the left wing in order to impose its blackmailing demands. Every time it organized sidewalk gatherings during the last two years, the opposition as a rule based its strength on communist support. Assisted by domestic and international communism, the opposition has managed to discredit the country abroad and has attempted to render the nation weaker.

The Political Problem. This is the great political problem you were called to face. I spotted it as soon as I returned to Greece. In alliance with communism, an unhesitating minority has attempted to blackmail those in the government. The minority has launched a slanderous campaign against all institutions in the country, primarily against the King, whose good will and good intentions no one can question. By doing so, the minority is trying to place us where we must either compromise, or stand the consequences of the anomaly it endeavors to create in cooperation with the left wing.

Unhesitating Exploitation. We have daily numerous examples of this unacceptable policy of the Center Union. The most characteristic of all, however, is the unhesitating twisting attempted because of an unforeseen tragic event, which took place about four months ago in Thessaloniki. We all expressed our sincere sympathy at this event, which resulted in the death of a representative of the nation. My government moved immediately and efficiently to provide the proper conditions to the courts so that there would be no interference in their work. Interference, however, came and is still coming from elsewhere. Both the attitude taken by the government and even simple reasoning indicate that in this particular case there has been no political responsibility. If this tragic event is an act of malicious intentions of certain persons, this is to be decided by Justice. What I can, however, state as of now, and before the decision of Justice, is that the political exploitation of this event which was attempted not only by the extreme left, but primarily the Center Union, is a serious crime against the nation. In addition to defaming the country abroad, the aim of this exploitation has been to shake the morale of the gendarmerie and the police, the members of which have suffered heavy losses in blood in order to protect the security of the Greek people and the heads of those who are now undermining them.

A Need for Radical Changes. The diseased political climate which prevails in this country, and particularly the events of the last two years, confirm my opinion that the public life of the country needs radical changes. Without these changes, any further moral or material progress

by the nation will become problematic and the security of the nation itself will be in danger.

Being aware of all these realities, I am decided to struggle to avert the dangers which threaten our regime and the peace of the country. My opponents have provided me with valuable experience during the last two years. They taught me that the policy of moderation becomes in their case useless. I can assure them that I will make good use of this experience and that I shall protect through all means the peace and progress of the Greek people. I shall insist on reforming the Constitution.

Our Constitution is not only antiquated in many of its provisions, but it also becomes an obstacle to the progress of the country. What is worse, it legalizes many evil things in the country of which we are aware, but cannot change.

By revising the Constitution we shall be able to make the state organization operate more efficiently and, on the other hand, protect our Nation and our Democracy from abuses and violations, which often allow a small number of ambitious and selfish persons to appear as if they are stronger than the majority of the people.

In order to continue my constructive work and make the required changes for the survival of our Democratic Regime, and in order to put an end to the policy of blackmailing and threats, I want you to give me an overwhelming majority.

My past is a guarantee that I shall be able to fulfill again the expectations of the Nation.

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